

NAXOS  
AudioBooks

CLASSIC  
FICTION

MODERN  
CLASSICS

Marcel Proust  
**The Captive**  
Part I

Read by **Neville Jason**



NA319012D

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST • IX

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|    |  |       |
|----|--|-------|
| 1  | In bed in Paris                                      | 6:13  |
| 2  | I rang for Françoise. I opened the Figaro            | 8:40  |
| 3  | As soon as she entered my room...                    | 8:01  |
| 4  | I questioned her point-blank                         | 6:12  |
| 5  | Françoise came in to light the fire                  | 8:32  |
| 6  | But already the day was ending                       | 6:49  |
| 7  | The Dreyfus affair – still                           | 5:16  |
| 8  | The Baron de Charlus and Morel                       | 9:38  |
| 9  | The Baron and Jupien's niece                         | 11:12 |
| 10 | The scent of syringa                                 | 4:25  |
| 11 | Reflections with Elstir, Bergotte, Vinteuill         | 8:18  |
| 12 | After Andrée left, Albertine came to my room         | 7:08  |
| 13 | Albertine reclining                                  | 6:16  |
| 14 | Two images of Albertine                              | 12:24 |
| 15 | Each day was for me a different country              | 10:43 |
| 16 | Albertine's intention to pay a visit to Mme Verdurin | 10:39 |

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|    |   |       |
|----|---|-------|
| 17 | Albertine went to take off her things...                | 5:10  |
| 18 | 'I was now at liberty to go out with Albertine          | 11:02 |
| 19 | On the morrow, I awoke early...                         | 9:55  |
| 20 | As soon as Albertine had gone out...                    | 10:33 |
| 21 | I had received a letter from Mamma that morning...      | 12:44 |
| 22 | Half an hour later, the telephone bell began to ring... | 9:27  |
| 23 | Albertine was on her way home                           | 6:01  |
| 24 | A memory of a far-off moment                            | 9:35  |
| 25 | I learned that a death had occurred...                  | 13:11 |
| 26 | Morel in tears  | 7:00  |

**Total time: 3:45:21**

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Marcel Proust  
**The Captive**  
Part I

*The Captive* continues the story of the Narrator's obsession with Albertine. Having re-established his friendship with her during his second visit to Balbec, Marcel is tortured by fears regarding her sexual orientation. These fears have their origin in two incidents. The first was when Marcel, accompanied by Dr Cottard, watched Albertine and her friend Andrée dancing together in the Casino and the doctor remarked on the intimate way the two girls were holding each other with their breasts touching, thereby alerting Marcel to the possibility that Albertine might be attracted to members of her own sex. However, he was ready to believe that the idea was due to his overheated imagination until Albertine innocently mentioned that her greatest friends were two older women, the daughter of the composer Vinteuil and her lesbian friend, whose private love-making Marcel had accidentally witnessed some years earlier at Combray.

From this moment he is determined to keep Albertine from satisfying her desire for women by whatever means necessary, even if it entails marrying her. On the spur of the

moment he decides to take her back to Paris with him where, in the absence of his parents, he installs her in his family's apartment and lavishes on her expensive gifts of jewellery and dresses. Albertine revels in such unaccustomed luxury and in return tries to please him by granting him certain sexual favours. But Marcel's jealous suspicions gradually turn her into a prisoner. He allows her to go nowhere without his permission, and gives the chauffeur he has engaged to drive her around Paris orders to keep constant watch on her. Although Albertine does not complain, Marcel is aware that by curtailing her freedom in this way he is making her more and more unhappy.

Marcel's is a love which can never be satisfied; as long as he feels secure in his possession of Albertine he is bored; it is only when he fears she is escaping that he feels an overwhelming yearning for her. The moment he suspects her of deceiving him his passion instantly revives. Although her docile obedience has the effect of calming his fears, Albertine is given to lying to him, and each time he catches her out,

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his anguish returns. He realises that even stronger than his wish to enjoy her himself, is his determination to prevent her from being enjoyed by another.

Proust's analysis of the pain caused by erotic love is unique. Not only does he display the observation of a scientist and the language of a poet, but his insight is that of a psychologist. In linking the Narrator's desire for Albertine's nightly caresses with his need for the benediction of his mother's goodnight kiss, Proust's understanding of the psychological phenomenon of a continuing Oedipal struggle is clearly demonstrated. Marcel's wish-fantasy of gaining complete possession of his mother's love by interposing himself between her and his father is replayed again and again as he attempts to secure the undivided affection of Albertine in separating her from possible rivals.

In *Remembrance of Things Past* the line between fact and fiction is fine indeed. Although publicly Proust denied that he and the Narrator were the same person, in *The Captive*, for the first time anywhere in the work, he teasingly lets slip the Narrator's name, which we are hardly surprised to learn is 'Marcel'. Nowhere in the narrative is it more evident that the author is speaking from the depths of his own experience when he observes in the words of the Narrator;

'Jealousy, which wears a bandage over its eyes, is not merely powerless to discover anything in the darkness which enshrouds it, it is also one of those torments where the task must be incessantly repeated, like that of the Danaïdes or Ixion.'

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## The previous books

*Swann's Way*, set in the village of Combray, introduces the reader to Marcel's family, their servants including the redoubtable Françoise, and their neighbour Charles Swann, the scholarly man of fashion. There are two country walks favoured by Marcel's family; *Swann's Way*, which lies in the direction of Swann's property, and the Guermantes Way, which skirts the estate of the noble Guermantes family.

*Swann in Love* tells the story of Swann's passion for the former courtesan Odette de Crecy, and Marcel's childish love for their daughter Gilberte. *Within a Budding Grove Part I* sees the end of Marcel's infatuation with Gilberte. Following an illness he is sent to recuperate at the seaside resort of Balbec together with his grandmother, who renews her acquaintance with an old school friend, the Marquise de Villeparisis.

In *Within a Budding Grove Part II* Marcel meets a band of charming young girls, to one of whom, Albertine, he is particularly attracted. He encounters the painter Elstir, whom the reader has met earlier as a member of Mme Verdurin's bohemian circle. He is also introduced to the sinister Baron de Charlus, and to Mme de Villeparisis's nephew, the Marquis Robert de Saint-Loup.

The *Guermantes Way Part I* finds Marcel's family installed in an apartment which forms

part of the Paris mansion of the Guermantes family. Marcel becomes obsessed with the Duchesse de Guermantes, who does not reciprocate his interest. At a reception given by the Marquise de Villeparisis, Marcel discovers that his father's colleague, the former diplomat M. de Norpois, has been the lover of the Marquise for many years.

The *Guermantes Way Part II* sees the death of Marcel's beloved grandmother following a stroke. Now that Marcel is no longer in love with the Duchesse de Guermantes her attitude towards him changes, and she invites him to dine. Seeing nobility at close quarters, Marcel is made aware of the fallibility of his fantasies about them. He receives an invitation from the Baron de Charlus, and is outraged by the manner of his reception. Charles Swann announces that he is suffering from a terminal illness.

In *Sodom and Gomorrah (Cities of the Plain) Part I* Marcel observes a homosexual encounter between the Baron de Charlus and the tailor Jupien, which leads to the author's meditations on the theme of homosexuality. Marcel continues to rise in the *haute monde* as he receives an invitation to a ball given by the Prince and Princesse de Guermantes. He pays a second visit to Balbec, where feelings of grief for the death of his grandmother vie with those of his

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desire for Albertine.

In *Sodom and Gomorrah (Cities of the Plain) Part II*, Madame Verdurin has taken a house for the summer in the locality of Balbec and invites Marcel and Albertine to join her 'little group' for her 'Wednesdays'. The violinist Charles Morel, whose father was valet to Marcel's uncle, becomes intimate with the Baron de Charlus. Marcel's suspicions regarding Albertine's lesbian tendencies are revived when he learns of her friendship with Mlle Vinteuil, who is due to arrive in Balbec. To avoid their meeting he decides to take Albertine with him to Paris.

## The Author

Marcel Proust was born on July 10, 1871. His father, a distinguished professor of medicine, was from a Catholic family, while his mother was Jewish. Although intent on becoming a writer from an early age, Proust was riddled with self-doubt.

During his twenties he co-founded a short-lived review, *Le Banquet*, contributed to *La Revue Blanche* and had his first book published in 1896, a collection of essays entitled *Les Plaisirs et les Jours*.

He became an enthusiastic admirer of Ruskin and translated his *Bible of Amiens* and *Sesame and Lilies* into French. A novel, *Jean Santeuil*, which was the precursor of *Remembrance of Things Past*, was abandoned, and eventually published long after Proust's death, in 1954.

For much of his youth Proust led the life of a man about town, frequenting fashionable Paris drawing rooms and literary salons, which were to form the background of a number of his early stories and sketches, and subsequently of *Remembrance of Things Past*.

The death of his adored mother in 1905 resulted in a nervous collapse and aggravated his chronic asthma and insomnia. But despite his grief and the sense of loss from which he never recovered, his mother's death freed him with regard to his homosexual emotional life, and allowed him

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to address homosexuality in his writing, albeit in a manner which treated such experiences as happening to others rather than to himself.

In 1907 he moved into an apartment in the Boulevard Haussmann where, in the bedroom which he had had lined with cork to keep out noise, he embarked upon his great work *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (*Remembrance of Things Past*).

This long autobiographical cycle was originally published in eight sections: *Du Côté de Chez Swann* (*Swann's Way*) in 1913; *A L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs* (*Within a Budding Grove*) in 1918; *Le Côté de Guermantes I* (*The Guermantes Way I*) in 1920; *Le Côté de Guermantes II* and *Sodom et Gomorrhe I* (*Cities of the Plain I*) in 1921; *Sodom et Gomorrhe II* in 1922; *La Prisonnière* (*The Captive*) in 1923; *Albertine Disparue* (*The Sweet Cheat Gone*) in 1925; *Le Temps Retrouvé* (*Time Regained*) in 1927.

Proust was obliged to publish *Swann's Way* at his own expense, and even after it had appeared, had trouble finding a publisher for the next part, *A L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs*. However, when it appeared in 1918 it received considerable acclaim, and was awarded the Prix Goncourt the following year.

By the time Proust died, on November 18, 1922, the first four parts of the cycle had been published, leaving the others

to appear posthumously. The English translation from which this abridged version has been prepared was made by C.K. Scott Moncrieff.

**Notes by Neville Jason**



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**The music on this recording is taken from  
the MARCO POLO catalogue**

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>BRETÓN</b> STRING QUARTET IN D MAJOR<br>György Oravecz, piano/New Budapest Quartet   | 8.223745 |
| <b>D'INDY</b> STRING QUARTET/ PIANO QUINTET<br>Ilona Prunyi, piano/New Budapest Quartet | 8.223691 |
| <b>WIDOR</b> PIANO QUINTET IN D MINOR<br>Ilona Prunyi, piano/New Budapest Quartet       | 8.223193 |

**Music programmed by Nicolas Soames**

Cover picture: Sleeping Woman, Henri Lebasque (1865-1937).  
Courtesy: The Bridgeman Art Library, London.

# Marcel Proust

## The Captive Part I

Read by **Neville Jason**

Marcel's suspicions regarding Albertine's lesbian desires lead to his keeping her a virtual prisoner in his Paris apartment.

A masterly portrayal of obsessional jealousy.



**Neville Jason** trained at RADA where he was awarded the Diction Prize by Sir John Gielgud. He has worked with the English Stage Co., the Old Vic Company and the RSC as well as in films, TV and musicals. He is frequently heard on radio. As well as *Remembrance of Things Past*, he also reads Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, *Far From The Madding Crowd*, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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3:45:21